ELL Reader

Genre	Build Background	Access Content	Extend Language
Fiction	• Character Development • Education • Self-Improvement	• Definitions • Labels	• Idioms

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PEARSON
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Hana Gets Serious

by Richard Tobolka
Illustrated by Bill Peterson





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Hana Hong is a student in our fifth grade class. Now, she acts like a serious student, but she wasn't always that serious. Before fifth grade, Hana was a playful student. She often made the students laugh, but her teachers did not think she was very funny. They thought Hana's jokes got in the way of learning. She liked being the class clown. We didn't get involved in her pranks because we didn't want to get into trouble. When Hana got into trouble, she missed recess, and she had to do extra school work. One time, she even had to stay at school when we all went on a field trip to the dinosaur museum.

pranks: playful tricks





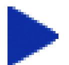


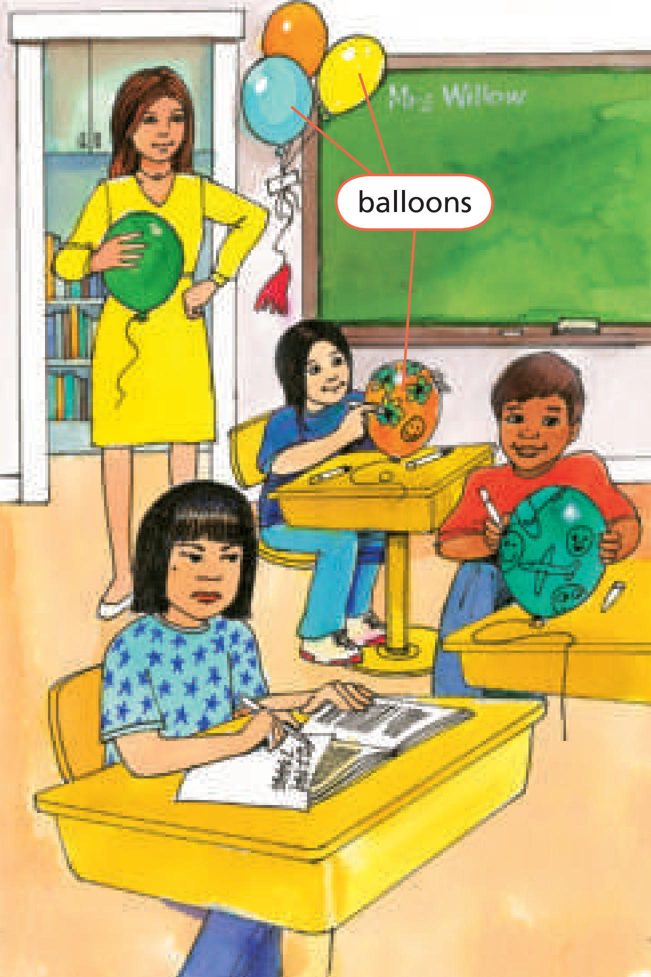
When Hana was in the third grade, she loved to stare out the window and watch the birds. Mr. Diaz, our teacher, moved her seat away from the window, but that didn't help.

One day Hana decided that if she couldn't go outside, she would bring the outdoors into the classroom. When it was time for silent reading, she began making bird noises. Her whistling wasn't very loud. We tried not to laugh because we were afraid we might get into trouble. But her whistling made a few of us chuckle. Mr. Diaz looked at Hana and frowned. He knew she was responsible for this problem. Hana had to miss recess for a week!

chuckle: laugh quietly

frowned: wrinkled the forehead to show disapproval or anger







When Hana was in the fourth grade, our teacher was Mrs. Willow. Mrs. Willow had a large closet for books and school supplies.

One day we came into the classroom and saw balloons on all the walls. Hana ran into the classroom and popped one of the balloons. Mrs. Willow told Hana to go and sit in her seat. She told the rest of us to go to the walls and pick a balloon. She had a fun art activity for us.

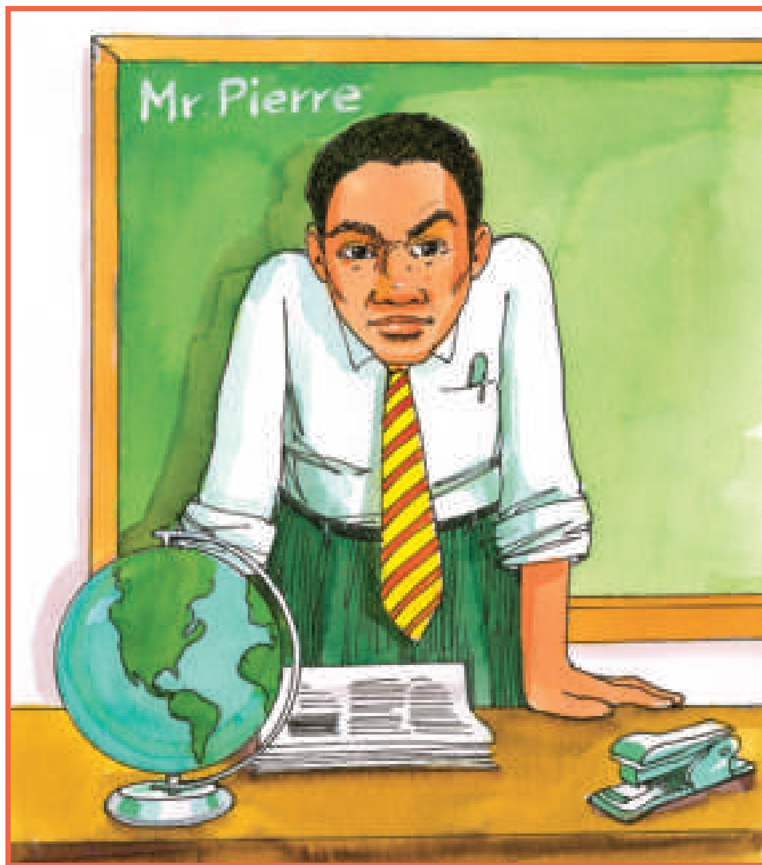
Mrs. Willow gave Hana a math assignment to do. Then she went to the closet and picked out a large box filled with markers of all colors. We all took a handful of markers and returned to our seats. Mrs. Willow told us to draw on our balloon. Hana could not take part in the activity since she had popped her balloon. Hana had to do her math assignment while we drew on our balloons. Hana missed out on a fun activity because of her prank.



Hana tried to be a serious student, but she was a day-dreamer. When she wasn't staring out the window, she was drawing in her notebook. She loved to draw things she saw outside. Ms. Klopp, our art teacher, put one of Hana's drawings on the bulletin board. It was a drawing of the forest and pond near our school. The sun was shining through the trees, and the clouds were pink.

When we had to write stories for our reading teacher, Hana's stories were always the best. She could describe places that seemed magical, and her stories had the most beautiful pictures.







On the first day of fifth grade, Hana told us that things were going to be different. She said she was not going to be the class clown any more. No one believed her. After all, during the past five years she didn't pay attention in class. She often was in trouble. She missed recess at least twice a month and missed the best field trip we ever had! So it was difficult for us to believe that Hana would change.

Hana knew this change was going to be difficult. She had to prove that she could be a serious student to her teachers and to her classmates. She was ready for the challenge.

challenge: difficult task





When we entered our fifth grade class, Mr. Pierre was ready. He had heard about Hana's reputation. Hana approached him.

"Hello, Mr. Pierre. I am Hana. Where shall I sit?"

Mr. Pierre thought Hana was up to her usual tricks. But he shook her hand and told her to sit in the front row. All day long he kept looking at Hana, wondering what would happen.

She raised her hand for every question and answered them correctly. Then Mr. Pierre gave us our first assignment. We had to write a report about somebody who had a positive effect on our lives. Later, Hana volunteered to be the first to present her report to the class.





When Hana began her class presentation, everyone was ready for something funny. But Hana had really become a serious student. She wore her best dress and gave an excellent report about George Washington Carver. As a child, Carver loved to spend his time outside and care for plants. He had to make many sacrifices to go to school, and he became a famous scientist and teacher.



Hana had read about George Washington Carver during the summer. She realized that education is important. From now on, she would be a great student. She wanted to follow in his footsteps. Mr. Pierre had a smile on his face, but he was not smiling at any jokes. He was smiling because Hana had decided to become a serious student.



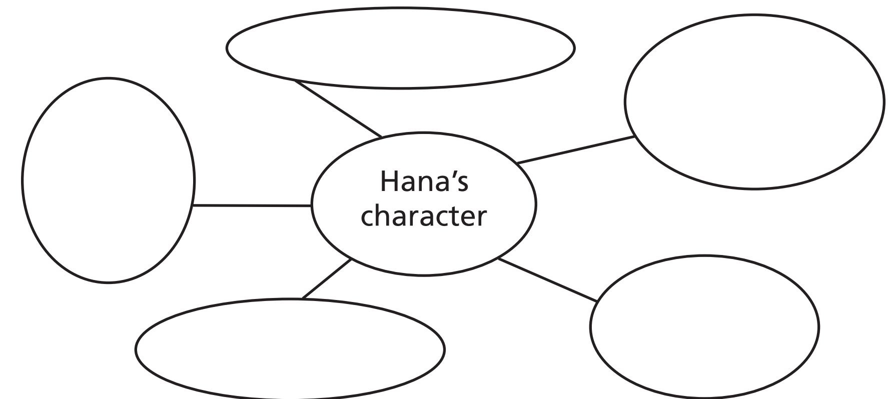


Talk About It

1. Discuss Hana's behavior at school. What does it tell you about her character—the way she thinks, feels, and acts?
2. Why does Hana decide to become a serious student?

Write About It

3. On a separate sheet of paper, draw a larger web to describe Hana's character. In each oval, write a word or phrase that describes her.



Extend Language

An idiom is an expression, or a group of words, whose meaning cannot be understood from the ordinary meaning of the words in it. For example, *follow in his footsteps* means "to do as he did" or "to try to be like him." Can you find another idiom on pages 2 and 6 of this book? What does it mean?

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